



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

July 19, 2018

To: Governor's Office, Patrick Holmes, State Capitol, Room 204, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:
Director's Office Parks Division Lands Section FWP Commissioners
Fisheries Division Legal Unit Wildlife Division Design & Construction
MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923
Jack Jones, 3014 Irene St., Butte, MT 59701
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Helena
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Helena
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 420 Barrett Street, Dillon, MT 59725
Big Hole Watershed Committee, P.O. Box 931, Butte, MT 59703
Big Hole River Foundation, P.O. Box 3894, Butte, MT 59701
Montana Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 7186, Missoula, MT 59807
Dan Vermillion, FWP Commissioner, Livingston MT
Earnest and Colleen Bacon, 2215 Fishtrap Creek Road, Wisdom, MT 59761
Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 730 N. Montana Street, Dillon, MT 59725-9424
George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 563, Butte, MT 59703
Skyline Sportsmen, P.O. Box 173, Butte, MT 59703
Anaconda Sportsmen, 2 Cherry, Anaconda, MT 59711
E.T. Bud Moran, Chairman CSKT, PO Box 278, Pablo, MT 59855
Al Lubeck, 2710 Amherst, Ave, Butte, MT 59701
Adam Rissien, ORV Coordinator, Wildands CPR, PO Box 7516, Missoula, MT 59807
Josiah Pinkham, Tribal Arch., Nez Perce Tribe, PO Box 365, Lapwai, ID 83540
John and Sandy Gordon, 119033 Juniper Acres Rd, Butte, MT, 59750
Phil Ralston, 54289 MT Highway 43, Wise River, MT 59762
Martin White, 3308 46th Ave. SE, Mandan ND, 58554-4730
Jerry Lussie, 305 Main Street, Anaconda, MT 59711
Jim Schmeller, Montana Living Trust, 4935 Everett Rd, Akron, OH 44333
Kieth and Jean Rankin, P.O. Box 28, Anaconda, MT 59711
Richard Seddon, 2017 Harrison Ave# 237, Butte, MT 59701
Haddox Ventures LLC, 9141 Briar Forest Dr., Huston, TX 77024
Frank Stanchfield, 62311 Hwy 43, Wise River, MT 59762
Bryon Lacey, 4034 Elizabeth Warren #1, Butte MT 59701
Mathew White, 4977 Foothill Rd, Butte, MT 59701
Lewis Pesanti, 1424 Sunrise Ln, Butte, MT 59701
Jim Street, 448 Red Fox Rd., Wise River, MT 59762

Donna Brown, P.O. Box 4, Wise River, MT 59762
Jim Bacon, 1000 Bossard Rd, Anaconda, MT, 59711
Bart Bacon, 3014 Carter St, Butte, MT, 59701
Bart Riley, 116057 Boulder Road, Butte MT 59750
Wade Fellin, 36894 Pioneer Mountains Scenic, Wise River, MT 59762
Don Stodden, P.O. Box, 96, Wise River, MT 59762
Debbie and Mike Robbins, 750 Alder Creek Rd, Wise River MT 59762
J.P. Gordon, 709 Illinois St., Butte, MT 59701
Chuck Buehler, 481 Little Basin Creek Road, Butte MT 59701
Tony Schoonen, 3609 Willoughby, Butte, MT 59701
Lee Krugerud, 1541 Lower Seymour Lake Road, Wise River MT 59762
Jason Barlman, 1901 Florence, Butte MT 59701
Steve Luebeck, 17 Queens Court, Butte MT 59701
Paul Olson, 524 Wolf Ridge Road, Wise River MT 59762
Scott Reynolds, 1700 Shirley Way, Anaconda MT 59711
Jack Hancock, 1374 Deep Creek Road, Wise River MT 59762
Katey and Jonathan White, 704 Stagecoach Rd, Butte, MT 59701
Pete and Shawn Enrooth, 1091 Beet Trail Rd, Butte, MT 59701
Craig Fellin, Box 156, Wise River, MT 59762
Dave McKernan, 1614 W Park St, Anaconda, MT 59711
Kirwan Webb, 2735 Floral Blvd. Butte, MT 59701
Hannah Buha, 2501 Edwards St. Butte, MT 59701
Mark Thompson, 2245 Skyway Ave. Butte, MT 59701
Brad and Kelsey McDuff, 2930 Josephine, Butte, MT 59701
Shan Reilly, 218 N Washington St. Butte, MT 59701
Noah Thatcher, 1014 W Granite, Butte, MT 59701
Chas Ariss, 800 Main St, Courthouse, Anaconda, MT 59711
Justin Mandic, 115 Grandview, Butte, MT 59701
RF Thompson 1512 Schley, Butte, MT 59701
Stan Strizic, P.O. Box 99, Wise River, MT 59762
Chris Spolar, 946 Deep Creek, Wise River, MT 59762
JoAnn Spolar, 390 Holmes Ave, Butte, MT 59762
Jim Street, 448 Red Fox Rd, Wise River, MT 59762
Dale Vintres, 59160 MT Hwy 43, Wise River, MT 59762
Benato Garwood, 30001 State St. Butte, MT 59701
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Stephen Frazee, 316 Galaxy Dr., Butte, MT 59701
Kim Snodgrass, 480 E Park St., Butte, MT 59701
Shane Reilly, 218 N Washington St. Butte, MT 59701
Chas Ariss, Anaconda Deerlodge County, 800 Main St, Courthouse, Anaconda, MT 59711
Bob Miller, 420 Lupine Ln, Butte, MT 59701
James Harrington, Box 785, Butte, MT 59701
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Patrick J. Connors, 1418 W Aluminum, Butte, MT 59701
Tom Bugni, 3460 St Ann, Butte, MT 59701
Tom Bowler 735 W Broadway, Butte, MT 59701
Mike Marcum, 2205 Amherst, Butte, MT 59701
Rich Day, 2615 Yale Ave, Butte, MT 59701
Roy Morris, 2901 Quincy, Butte, MT 59701
Jim Hagenbarth, P.O. Box 1128, Dillon, MT 59725
Bill Drury, 815 12th St., Butte, MT 59701

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is proposing to restore native aquatic species to the French Creek watershed in the Big Hole River drainage. Native fish restoration would consist of the construction of a fish migration barrier on French Creek near the downstream boundary of the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area (WMA). This fish barrier would consist of an earthen dam with a concrete spillway that forms a small waterfall and precludes upstream fish passage. Upstream of the fish barrier are more than 40 miles of stream that currently contain fish. Once the fish barrier is in place, non-native trout (brook trout and rainbow trout) would be removed from the stream using the piscicide rotenone in the formulation of CFT Legumine (5% rotenone). Once non-native fish are removed, native westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) and Arctic grayling would be stocked into the stream.

An Environmental Assessment detailing this multifaceted project was released on April 29, 2016, for public comment. At that time, a total of 2 written comments were received and a Decision Notice (DN) was issued and signed on June 13, 2016. Subsequently, it was discovered that landowners within and immediately downstream of the project area had been accidentally omitted from the mailing list for the initial public comment period. A second announcement was generated and sent to these landowners, and the comment period was extended to allow for input from the landowners that were missed. No additional written comments were received, and the original DN was not modified. In the fall of 2017 as the fish barrier portion of the project was put out to bid, FWP staff became aware of some additional questions and concerns from local landowners regarding the project. A public meeting was held in Wise River, MT, on 8/31/17, and FWP heard these concerns. In response to these questions and concerns, FWP performed additional analyses, made some changes to the proposed plan for native fish restoration, and produced a Supplementary Analysis. The Supplementary Analysis included only the native fish restoration portion of the overall French Creek Watershed Restoration. The analysis was released for public comment on 3/30/18, and a public meeting was held on 4/26/18 at the Copper King Hotel in Butte. Verbal and written comments were received at this meeting, and requests were made to extend the comment period an additional 30 days. An extension was made and comments were received until 5/31/18 when the comment period closed. During the comment period, several news stories were run on the project and several editorials were submitted to the Montana Standard. The project was also noticed in the Montana Standard and Dillon Tribune.

A total of 63 comments were received (35 in favor of the project, 26 opposed (including a petition signed by 193 people), and 2 neutral comments).

These comments are attached as Appendix A. Responses to these comments follow this cover letter. Comments were grouped according to a topic and addressed under the heading for that particular topic. Comments of similar nature were combined and addressed under a single comment. FWP's responses to these comments follow each comment. No new issues were raised that were not addressed in the original EA, Supplemental Analysis, or that could not be addressed in this document.

After having considered these comments and potential benefits and the potential drawbacks of the proposed project, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed restoration actions in the French

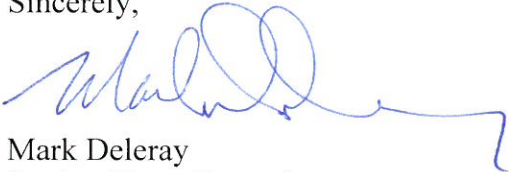
Creek watershed. It is also my decision that the EA remains the appropriate level of analysis for this project. This type of fish restoration project is relatively common. FWP has successfully completed similar projects in 21 streams within Region 3 in the last decade. FWP conducted 11 projects in the Big Hole drainage in recent years. FWP staff is experienced, trained and certified in application of Rotenone. There are no long-term, significant impacts of the project that either cannot be mitigated for or that are deemed beneficial, such as native fish restoration in French Creek.

Questions regarding these Decision Notices should be mailed to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
French Creek Restoration
Attn: Jim Olsen
1820 Meadowlark Ln.
Butte, MT 59701

Or e-mailed to: jimolsen@mt.gov

Sincerely,



Mark Deleray
Region Three Supervisor